4: Bowen C-5 (1950) 1951 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK2

manded.[46] Few dhows carry ship's carpenters; they hire a carpenter when they need one.

The actual duties of a dhow crew may often begin weeks or months before the voyage starts. If the dhow is new, the first duties of the crew are to rig the ship and make the sails (see Plate 20—top). A boatbuilder furnishes only the hull with masts and yards; fitting out the ship is considered part of the work preliminary to making the voyage, and the sailors do not actually receive money for this preliminary work, as they are paid only when the voyage is over. If they actually need it, the *nakhoda* will give the sailors cash advances; these advances are later deducted from the sailor's share of the vessel's earnings at the end of the voyage. Thus the *nakhoda* fits out his ship at no cost to himself so far as labor goes—the crew actually furnishes it for nothing! Besides this the crew does all the stevedoring on any cargo the dhow may carry, also transporting the cargo in the longboat when required (see Plate 19—bottom).

Arab dhows keep no schedule and know little routine. At sea everyone, including the *nakhoda,* usually loses track of time. Friday, the Moslem day of rest, is not observed at sea, so the sailors work the month around and days come to mean nothing; it is easier not even to try to keep track of them. The only track of time the Arabs keep is the occurrence of Ramadhan, the month when the Moslems fast during the daylight hours. The Arabs know whether Ramadhan is before them or whether it has passed; if it is ahead of them, they keep a very rough idea of how far off it is.

When there is no work, the crew sleeps in a shady spot, if one is available—on the cargo or a pad. All hands turn out day and night for any work. It is not uncommon to see a dhow-load of sleeping sailors pass in broad daylight, but they can be on their feet in a second.

Watches are informal and virtually nonexistent on a dhow. Usually the *nakhoda* keeps watch during the day and the mate or a quartermaster or a boatswain keeps watch during the night. It usually turns out that the helmsman keeps watch, as he is the only man who has to keep awake! The carpenter on a Kuwait ship stands no watches and has few other duties outside of his boatbuilding.

There is a general working period of several hours for all hands every day, usually during the morning. The most essential duty is bailing; the foul bilge water is brought up from a small bailing-well in buckets, and is either dumped into a bailing-trough to flow overboard or dumped overboard via a fireman's bucket brigade. The decks are never washed down, as the water would drain below, through the leaky decks, rather than

[46] A. Villiers, *SS*, p. 268.

4: Bowen C-5 (1950) 1951 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK2

501 a headdress—serve as his bedding. The Arab has not been spoiled by soft mattresses and can get a good night's rest on a floor, deck, or hard ground. The *nakhoda*, the mate, and a few selected passengers live on the poop. Sometimes an awning is spread over the poop to keep the burning sun out, and other times it is bare; sometimes a Persian rug is spread on the poop. There is invariably a cabin beneath the poop for the storage of valuable cargo and ship's stores (see Plate 22—top). This cabin is usually only the space between the continuation of the main deck and the poop deck. Sometimes there are doors leading forward, but more often it is simply open.

As there is no below on a dhow, there are quite naturally no toilets below. Dhows do carry toilets, however, in the form of one-holed privies, hung overboard off the poop (see Plate 21—bottom). They are usually on the port side, but are sometimes seen on the starboard; I once saw a large *sambuk* in Aden with two, one to port and one to starboard. These lack the privacy of a privy, and are almost completely open. Freya Stark[21] had to have the captain rig up a special awning for her when she traveled down the South Arabian coast in a dhow.

When the dhows carry passengers they are packed on the main deck like cattle. Living conditions are not too bad without passengers, but with a load of passengers, conditions immediately become foul. Ordinarily the bilge on a dhow is beyond description, but sanitary conditions become unimaginable with a load of passengers who are so packed in that they cannot all hang over the rail in rough weather. Villiers[22] tells of seeing a small 60-foot *bhum* from Oman sailing down the coast of Africa with about two hundred Omani passengers; it was estimated by the Arabs on Villiers' ship that ten of these would die before reaching Zanzibar. Whenever there is a death aboard, the Arabs conduct a hasty sea burial; deaths are never reported to port authorities by the Arabs, for fear of not being cleared.

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805 Although the Arab aboard ship has little concept of time as far as days go, he divides the day into four periods separated by the announcement 788 of the five daily prayers in which all good Moslems religiously indulge. Prayer time is announced by the *muezzin* (prayer caller), who may be any one of the crew or officers. The *muezzin* simply announces the time of prayer, and bears no similarity to a priest or minister, for the Moslems have none of these; their religion is voluntary. The first sound to fall on Arab ears every day is the raucous call of the *muezzin* perched on some

[21] F. Stark, *A Winter in Arabia* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1940), p. 314.
[22] A. Villiers, 55, p. 124.